# GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational Society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under the Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

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TWO ALBANIANS, MEMBERS OF THE OLDEST RACE IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

(see Bulletin No. 5.)

## HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETIN

The Geographic News Bulletin is published weekly throughout the school year (thirty issues) and will be mailed to teachers for one year upon receipt of 25 cents (in stamps or money order). Entered as second-class matter, January 27, 1922, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 9, 1922.

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## Chincoteague Feels the Oyster Slump

THE EAST'S "Wild West" is sadly troubled. It is not because of any cattle disease or because its plains have dried up or a terrific blizzard descended on it unawares. A severe slump in oysters worries Chincoteague.

Chincoteague, or Fortunate Isle, a name which carries irony in this bad year for oystermen, is located off the "peninsula." In a nation noted for disregard of natural boundaries, such as rivers and mountain ranges for dividing lines, the peninsula separating Chesapeake Bay from the stormy Atlantic, contains probably the most artificial state lines to be found in the United States. At the upper end is the swinging L of tiny Delaware, almost entirely surrounded by Maryland. But the tail of the peninsula is chopped off with a straight, decisive Virginia line and at the Atlantic end of the line lies Chincoteague.

The island is eight miles long and about three wide and nowhere rises much higher above the sea than a Pacific Ocean coral reef. A slender line of pines forms Chincoteague's backbone; all else is waving grass and on these uncultivated plains thrive wild ponies. There is no competition for existence between the ponies and Chincoteague's 3,000 or more inhabitants because the natives take their living entirely from the sea. Agriculture is for landlubbers, so the ponies run the island, grazing on salt marsh grass and getting their water supply from stagnant or brackish pools.

### Fishermen Hold a Round-up

Chincoteague stages an annual wild west show in August and hundreds of sightseers come over from Franklin City, on the mainland, to see the fun. Although the tough ponies boldly race into the salty surf and have been known to swim small straits, the islanders are able to herd them to one spot. The colts are branded and a certain number auctioned off. Chincoteague ponies are tamable and by virtue of their rugged, outdoor life are far sturdier than ordinary ponies.

When captured in the round-up the wild Chincoteague ponies are hairy, unkempt, ill-looking beasts, but clippers and care transform them into lithe, miniature horses. The origin of the breed is lost to history, but legend has it that they are descendants of horses which swam ashore from a shipwreck in the 18th century.

Wild ponies are found in many places, notably the high hills of Wales and southern Spain, where similar round-ups are held. The only place where wild ponies live which are not run-out breeds of domesticated horses is mid-Asia.

Riches lie at Chincoteague's front door and that has been the Island's principal claim to the title, Fortunate Isle. Unemployment is unknown in normal times, for the sea spreads her treasure and the only individuals who are downright poor are those who will not work. Oysters are the chief crop. Most of the beds lying off shore now are controlled by a few citizens. When Virginia changed her policy from state control to private ownership of oyster beds many Chincoteaguers bought oyster "real estate." Hundreds now have sold out their rights, preferring to "tong" oysters for someone who would take the responsibility of proprietorship.



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**SEED PODS OF A FLOWER OF THE NORTHWEST STATES**

Anemones of the Pacific coast come early, sometimes forcing their way through the edges of lingering snow beds. Though the plant ends its blossom season early its seed pods are covered with a spectacular plume of light brownish gray that attracts attention until the end of summer (see Bulletin No. 2).

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## How the States Chose Their Flowers

SWEET, retiring modesty runs neck and neck with flaunting beauty according to the vote for favorite flowers registered by the States in "The Book of Wild Flowers" recently published by The National Geographic Society.

Four States, Illinois, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and New Jersey, proclaimed the modest violet their flower emblem. Four States, Iowa, North Dakota, Georgia and New York, chose the rose.

"The violets have a slight advantage," says Dr. William Joseph Showalter in his biography of the violet, "in that they can claim legislative recognition by three States, where the wild roses have the legislative award of only two. Illinois, Wisconsin, and New Jersey chose the violet by legislative action and Rhode Island, by the vote of her school children."

### Some Selected by School Children's Votes

The schools have had a big part in selecting State flowers. In seven states the school children's vote stands as final; in Alabama they selected the goldenrod, in Colorado the blue columbine, in Maine the pine tree, in Mississippi the southern magnolia, in New Mexico the cactus, in New York the rose, and in Rhode Island the violet. In other States they have fostered the movements which finally led the legislatures to adopt floral emblems. Now only one State, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, fail to pay fealty to a favorite blossom within their borders.

"The mistletoe of Oklahoma is the only one of the State flowers so far adopted that is parasitic in its habits," writes Dr. Showalter. And yet parasite, or no parasite, there is no blossom in the catalogue that has more of romance clinging to it than Oklahoma's representative.

"If you ask the Oklahoman about the mistletoe as a parasite, he is likely to answer that if man, tapping the maple for sugar, extracting the sap of the rubber tree for automobile tires, and taking the pine tree's turpentine, is a parasite, then the mistletoe may be called one too; but that otherwise it deserves to be absolved. It has as much right to get its food from trees, he maintains, as we have to eat beef and mutton or wear woolen clothes or silks and satins."

### Trees, Bushes and Vines Chosen

State "flowers" are not necessarily blossoms. In addition to the parasitic mistletoe, other growing things selected as state emblems are trees, bushes and vines. Maine stands by her pine, Indiana the tulip tree, Louisiana and Mississippi the magnolia, and Missouri the hawthorne. In the realm of bush favorites the mountain laurel has the vote of Connecticut; the syringa is appointed to high place in Idaho; the sagebrush in Nevada; Washington and West Virginia have put the accolade on two members of the populous rhododendron family; while Virginia naturally could select nothing but the dogwood.

Flowers are generally regarded as weak, delicate things whose chief purpose is to be ornamental rather than useful. That the lilies of the field do "toil and spin" is established in the volume's description of the mysteries of plant life, as follows:

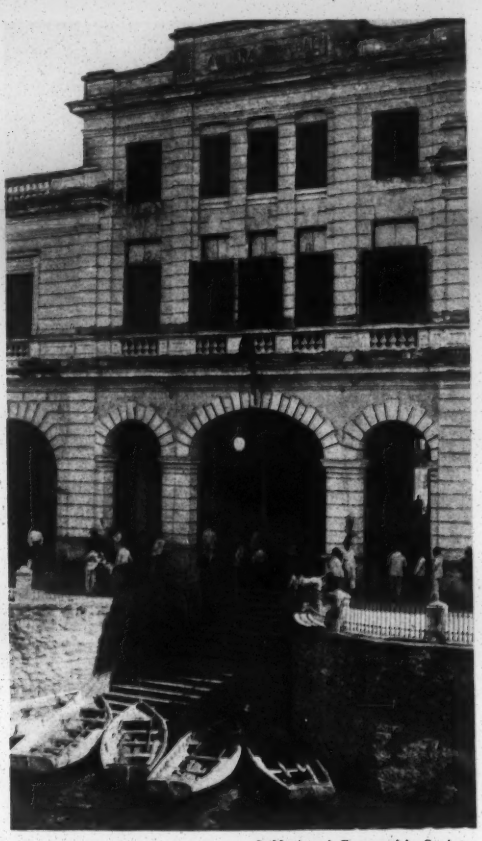
"All the factories, all the railroads, all the mines, all the automobiles, all the

## A Dooryard Occupation

If Chincoteague were an out-rider of the peninsula, bearing the brunt of Atlantic storms, it would not have the nickname, Fortunate Isle. Instead it is sheltered affectionately in the bent arm of Assateague, a long sand spit, bulwark of the coast. Chincoteaguers tonging oysters and digging clams know little of the old ocean's disregard for human life. In the shelter of the pleasant and usually profitable isolation the fisher-folk communities can not fail to be peaceful. Beyond are the oyster beds rented by the state government. A clam digger is not a mere laborer, but in a sense an artist, for ability to recognize the tiny "keyholes" in the sand is a talent. Such a man in Chincoteague is said to be "right quick to sign and wade them out."

Clamming on Chincoteague is a dooryard occupation. Each householder owns riparian rights to the beach in front of his home as far out as the tide goes.

**Bulletin No. 1, February 16, 1925.**



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**THE RIVERSIDE CUSTOM-HOUSE AT ASUNCION, PARAGUAY, SUGGESTS THE ENTRANCE TO A VENETIAN HOTEL**

**Farm machinery, fence wire, railway supplies, and coal enter free of duty here. The average time of mail delivery between New York and Asuncion is 37 days. A depth of 10½ feet of water is available on the Rio de la Plata, the Parana, and the Paraguay throughout the year, although Asuncion is 1,150 miles inland (see Bulletin No. 4).**

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## Malaga Tied to America by Cable

MALAGA, a name familiar to American ears because of a luscious grape, soon will be a connecting link between the United States and Italy. It is the point of departure for Italy of a new cable which now affords the record speed of 1,700 words per minute with Spain.

This ancient and famous seaport of Southern Spain is not remote—it won prestige in earlier times by the frequent sailings from its harbor to England, France and Italy. It still does a considerable export business to those countries and far more distant places. But it renounces tourists to retain its traditions.

Its white houses glisten in a seldom-failing sunshine on the blue Mediterranean, and a rampart of hills helps keep its temperature equable and dry. These qualities have made it a rendezvous for a few sufferers from heart and lung troubles; but its aridity is hard on nervous patients.

### Raise Vegetables for France

Malaga grows her famous grapes for raisins and wine, and gardens to the west of the city yield an amazing volume of melons, almonds, pomegranates and olives. The first spring vegetables served in fashionable French hotels are likely to have come from Malaga. There, too, the flowers the Englishman cultivates grow wild. Roses bloom in January and the profusion of the carnation, periwinkle, oxalis and sweet alyssum is a revelation to the northern visitor.

Malaga has been called the noisiest city in Spain, yet this noise does not arise from hurry. Until recently there was only one mail a day which, arriving at 7 o'clock in the evening, was not delivered until the next morning. Vegetables and fruits yield their choicest specimens, the climate is salubrious and the sun seldom is scorching, the peace of the hills and the calm of the sea cut off the Malaguean from most world disturbances. Hence the vigorous Englishman and the brisk American are a source of surprise, and commiseration to him.

### A Faded Bloom of the Middle Ages

Moorish Malaga of the Middle Ages was a much more cosmopolitan city. It had prospered under Roman rule, Carthage had built warehouses there, the Phoenicians had recognized its strategic location, but it was the Spanish Arabs who brought it to a climax of wealth and bedecked its harbor with the flags of the entire trade world of the Middle Ages.

In those times the Genoese merchants who settled there outdid all the numerous nationalities in elegance and opulence. Their great palaces, amid groves of sweet-smelling trees, and gardens of beautiful flowers, were decorated with the intricate grandeur of the Arab style.

Today's Malaga is a direct contrast to its Moorish magnificence. It is quaint, interesting, but simplicity prevails. There is little formal entertainment, theaters are rather indifferent, the bull-ring, on a Sunday afternoon, offers the week's gala event.

activities of man of whatsoever nature that require power, do not utilize as much energy as is developed by the plant world.

### Built of Sunshine, Air and Water

"Out of intangible sunshine, insubstantial air, and clear water, coupled with a modicum of mineral matter from the soil, plants must manufacture all the food that keeps alive the innumerable hosts of animals of the earth, store up all the heat that keeps humanity warm and cooks its food, furnish most of the power that drives its industries, and provide the raw material for all the clothes mankind wears and many of the products of which his factories, his houses, his furniture, and his books are made.

"Would you know how much of a plant is fabricated of sunshine, air and water, and how little solids from the earth? Then burn that plant and notice the thin layer of ash remaining. All else has been made up from subtle sunbeams, thin air, and plain water.

"Every plant, from a simple moss to a giant tree, is in reality a vast household of individual entities working together, in fine cooperation and close harmony, to a common purpose. One group pumps up the water required by the community, which is carried to the points where it is needed by another group.

### Each Plant a City in Itself

"Others, respectively, obtain the solid food from the ground, mix it with air, sunshine, and water to make a substantial dish; carry the food to the various parts of the household; store up the leftovers; build additions to the house; and prepare to send out colonies from the parent rooftree, fully 'grubstaked' and equipped to gain a foothold wherever they may settle down."

**Bulletin No. 2, February 16, 1925.**

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**OYSTER CULTURE IN FORMOSA**

**The soft muddy bottom all along the coast renders the cultivation of oysters a difficult matter. To obviate this natural disadvantage stones have to be laid in regular rows, to which the young oysters can attach themselves (see Bulletin No. 1.)**

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## Paraguay: Another South American Cow Country

PARAGUAY, next to the smallest, but one of the most interesting countries in South America, is to have a diplomatic representative in Washington after a lapse of many months in such representation.

A country whose population was almost wiped out of existence, but which has "come back" successfully; where women outnumber men several times over; where cattle graze the year round under palm trees; and where bearded cowboys wear bloomers—such is the Paraguay of today.

With an area about as large as that of the State of Wyoming, Paraguay, in 1865, had a population comparable to that of extensive Argentina and huge Brazil, and thanks to the military ambitions of its dictator, Francisco Lopez, the most powerful army in South America. Lopez believed himself destined to be the Napoleon of the Western Hemisphere, and in 1865 confidently led the army of his little country against the combined forces of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

The five-year conflict preceding his defeat was so bloody that between two-thirds and five-sixths of the Paraguayan population perished. Of a population that may have passed the million mark, only about 200,000 women and less than 30,000 men—mostly old men and young boys—were left. The losses were heavier, probably, than those suffered by any other nation in modern times. Even today Paraguay is largely a land of women, the men being greatly in the minority.

### Spanish Governor Deposed by Missionaries

Paraguay's history has been filled with conflicts, violence and unusual situations from the first. To begin with there has been a slighter admixture of European blood than in any other South American country, and the fire of the old Indian blood has been preserved. A little band of Spaniards sailed up La Plata, Parana, and Paraguay rivers in 1536 and in the heart of South America founded a settlement. They took Indian wives. They and their descendants became the ruling power in the land, eventually establishing great haciendas on which the Indians worked.

Missionaries who went to the region in 1609 brought the Indians together into settlements of their own and taught them to carry on agriculture for themselves. This was resented by the half-breeds and the situation was further complicated by the arrival of other missionaries who destroyed the early settlements. The first comers armed the Indians, expelled the Spanish governor and the later arrivals, and wrote the second unusual chapter in Paraguayan history. For more than 100 years they conducted a sort of "church-state." Later, Spanish governors, who cruelly oppressed the people, came back into power.

After independence from Spain was won in 1810, Paraguay entered upon a period of dictatorships and became the hermit nation of the west. Trade with outside countries and the presence of foreigners was strictly prohibited and the country came to be entirely a self-reliant unit. A sort of communism was established for many years, a portion of the land being worked for the state and the proceeds used for the benefit of the people. De Francia, the first and most benevolent of the dictators, was absolute despot of the country for 25 years.

## Wife Retains Her Maiden Name

Romance lives in the evening courtship scenes, where swains thrum their guitars to win a smile and a chat with fair maids guarded by iron bars.

The bars seem medieval to the mind of an American girl yet, in one respect, the Malaga woman has long exercised a modern privilege. When she marries she retains her full maiden name, simply affixing that of her husband, which procedure makes her complete "married name" so long that she continues to be known and referred to informally by her maiden name.

Theoretically a Malaga marriage, as in other regions of Southern Spain, is a mother-in-law arrangement. The mother of the suitor asks the mother of his sweetheart for the hand of her daughter. Malaga's women folk are notably pretty and high-spirited. After the age of sixteen, if a suitor's attentions are distasteful to a girl's parents she may, and frequently does, appeal to a court for a "deposit"—a sort of injunction proceeding against parental interference in affairs of the heart.

The court places the young woman in custody of a disinterested person, or in a convent, for a few months, during which time she is forbidden to see either parents or suitor. If she returns from this enforced period of meditation determined to marry she is free to do so.

## The Andalusian Loves His Donkey

The derivation of Malaga's name points to an important industry. "Malaga" is derived from "malac," a Phoenician verb meaning "to salt," because the village of early times was known for its salt fish, as the city is to-day.

Two principal indulgences of the Malaga men are cigarettes and sweetmeats. There are no rules against smoking on Malaga street cars, even if the doors and windows are closed, and there is no prejudice against a man walking through the streets, or sitting at the bull fight arena, nibbling at some dainty confection. Sweetmeat shops abound. And also donkeys. The affection which the American bestows upon horse or dog, the Andalusian lavishes upon his donkey. Donkeys and sweetmeats are not wholly unrelated. On a stroll through Malaga's outskirts one may see scores of donkey ears and donkey noses, which is about all of the animals which project beyond the loads of brushwood they convey to the bakeries.

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## Albania: A Stormy Little State

PEACE seems to be achieved in the tumultuous Balkan region except in Albania, where a new dictator has forced into exile a former dictator who himself sent the new dictator into exile no longer ago than last March.

Strict border control by neighboring states has cut off one of the Albanians' chief sources of activity and occupation, that of cattle raiding, according to one writer, and the result is civil war within the mountain state.

The country was created in 1912 to avert a World War and until the World War did come it was Europe's newest nation, though it was peopled by the oldest race in the Balkans. During the world struggle five countries occupied parts of it; Germany, Austria and Bulgaria controlling northern districts while France and Italy divided the south.

### "Not for Albany, Try Europe"

It was Edward Gibbon who once called Albania "a country within sight of Italy, which is less known than the interior of America." More than a century later the tables were turned when a letter from England for Albania was sent to the United States and returned with the notation "Not for Albany, try Europe." Even today when the war's aftermath has carried Americans into many obscure corners of Europe, Albania remains almost unvisited, unknown, and seldom mentioned in the day's news.

The Albanians are a rugged, primitive mountain people who, it has been said, "occasionally die from ordinary disease, but more often from differences of opinion." They are classed along with the French, Portuguese and Walloons as members of the Greco-Latin branch of the Aryan race. Their mountain life has fostered a passionate love of independence and they cling to their language and their customs with a vigorous tenacity, even when groups are transplanted to other lands. The name of the Albanians, meaning "people of the snow-land," has been fastened upon them by their neighbors; they call themselves "Skipetari," or mountaineers. One important tribe, the Catholic Mirdites, bitterly oppose the settlement of any Mohammedans in their vicinity.

### Tirana, Capital, Lies Inland

Along the Shkumbia River the Roman Egnatian Way still displays its traces. This stream divides the Christian Albanians into two groups. The Roman Catholic Ghegs live to the north, the Greek Orthodox Toscs live to the south.

An Albanian, Marco Bozzaris, is referred to in the famous lines, "At midnight in his guarded tent." George Castriota, better known as Scanderbeg, is their national hero.

The home town of Scanderbeg, victor in a score or more fierce battles with the Turks, is Kroia (or Kruga) located on a picturesque precipice of Albania's westernmost mountain chain.

Tirana is in the west central part of Albania, 20 miles inland from Durazzo, the country's principal port and former capital. Until the outbreak of the World War the only well-paved highway in the country linked these two



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When he died there was a short period of fighting and turbulence from which Carlos Lopez emerged as dictator. After him came his son, Francisco, under whom the population suffered its greatest losses.

### The Cowboys Wear Bloomers

Paraguay of today is a sort of inland Florida of fertile soil, equable climate, and abundant fruits and food products. On its rich grass lands vast herds of cattle graze the year round under palm trees. Cowboys tending the herds wear, instead of the "chaps" of our western plains, loose, baggy bloomers. Only Argentina with its more extensive plains surpasses Paraguay as a cattle country. A number of packing plants have been established by North American interests.

The Paraguay River has a greater flow than the Mississippi, and Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, though more than a thousand miles from the sea, is a busy port for trade with the outside world.

Paraguay had its "after-the-war problem" a long time before it was forced on the rest of the world; and the little republic has largely solved it. It was necessary for the women left after the War of 1865 to bring the country back to prosperity, and their marked industry did it. Today there is a degree of general prosperity in the republic that compares favorably with that in most other countries.

**Bulletin No. 4, February 16, 1925.**

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## Form for Renewal of Bulletin Requests

Many requests for the GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN were made for the year ending with this issue. If you desire the Bulletins continued kindly notify The Society promptly. The attached form may be used:

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cities. Not a mile of railroad has yet been built. The government seat was moved inland as a measure of protection against such invasions as that which overtook Fiume.

Tirana lacks the aspects of a frontier settlement that one would expect. It has rich bazaars, homes that seem truly palatial in comparison with the primitive village mud houses, and mosques of genuine beauty, facing broad, well-paved streets. The streets are spotted with squares where fountains play and market places where women sell embroideries, brass work and intricately carved pipes for smokers. The city's population is less than 15,000.

### The Witch That Goes Through Keyholes

An Albanian family is sufficient unto itself. Except for the trading in a few cities—in Scutari, Korytza and Argyrocastro, besides those already mentioned, there is no semblance of an economic system.

A woman in a country district works hard, but she is no mere drudge. She makes bread of maize and cooks it over an open hearth fire. The remaining wood ashes she uses in place of soap. She weaves woolen cloth and plaits black braid for the garments she makes of it.

The folklore of these country folk is extensive and remains to be studied. There are tales galore of the "evil eye," the casting of spells and witchcraft. Many of these have a crude basis of utility. One observer points to a widespread belief in the Shtriga, or witchwoman, who has the power to decrease her size to that of a fly, crawl through keyholes and crannies, and suck her victim's blood. He wonders whether the malaria-carrying mosquito may not have given rise to this story.

Bulletin No. 5, February 16, 1925.

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**HARVESTING ALMONDS**

**The farmer usually spreads canvas under the tree and carefully knocks the nuts off with a pole. His family gathers them, and cracks and shells them in the farmhouse. The almond is the heaviest nut crop in Spain (see Bulletin No. 3).**